



Barbecue Safety

What's better than a steak right off the grill? Barbecuing is a popular pastime during the spring and summer months. It's important to prevent foodborne illness during preparation, grilling, serving and storing. Following these simple guidelines can protect you and your loved ones from harmful bacteria.

Preparation

- When marinating meat and poultry, place it in the refrigerator instead of on the counter.
- Do not reuse the leftover marinade unless you have boiled it first!
- If you intend on grilling vegetables along with your meats, keep them separate from each other prior to cooking to avoid any cross-contamination.
- Wash any utensils and plates that may have come into contact with the raw meat before using with cooked foods.
- Take only the amount of food that you intend to cook outside. Keep the rest refrigerated.
- Precooking foods in the microwave can be a great time saver! Make sure to move them directly from the microwave to the grill to ensure that cooking is complete.
- When traveling with food in a cooler, place the cooler in the coldest part of your car. In addition, make sure to keep it out of direct sunlight and avoid frequent opening and closing of the lid.
- When barbecuing away from home, make sure there is a clean water source available for preparation and cleaning tasks.
- Completely defrost meat before placing it on the grill to make sure it cooks evenly.



Grilling



- Cook everything thoroughly. Using a meat thermometer, the following internal temperatures (Fahrenheit) should be achieved: ground beef - 160°; whole poultry - 180°; poultry breast - 170°; pork - 160°; ground poultry - 165°; beef, lamb and veal steaks, roasts, and chops - 145° (medium rare), 160°F (medium); and fish - 145°.

Serving and Storing

- Serve hot food immediately and refrigerate it within the first two hours of serving. If the temperature outside is 90°F or higher, food can be held without refrigeration for only one hour.
- Make sure to clean your grill after use so that dirt and bacteria do not stick to it.
- Refrigerate any leftovers promptly. Make sure to divide up any large portions and place them in shallow pans to further aid the cooling process.

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